

THE
CAMBRIDGE
GUIDE TO

WOMEN'S WRITING
IN ENGLISH

Lorna Sage

ADVISORY EDITORS

Germaine Greer
University of Warwick

Elaine Showalter
Princeton University



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Abbess of Crewe, The (1974) MURIEL SPARK'S fourteenth novel is a characteristically elegant and economical satire on politics, and, in particular, surveillance, inspired largely by the Watergate affair. In the Benedictine Abbey at Crewe, the sinister and manipulative Sister Alexandra has recently triumphed in the elections for Abbess, aided by a secret inner circle of loyal nuns, and by her extensive and closely monitored network of listening and viewing devices. Her supremacy is threatened, however, by her defeated rival, Sister Felicity, who has fled the Abbey following the bungled robbery of her silver thimble by representatives from a nearby Jesuit Order, and who is now engaged in unmasking Alexandra's misdemeanours to the press and television. The Abbess's struggle for control of the Order, in the course of which she continually asserts that she and her cohorts are operating in the realm of mythology, and are therefore not subject to everyday laws, echoes Spark's perennial interest in the nature of charisma, the conflict between personal will and the larger forces of history, and the battle between good and evil, particularly within a religious setting. AC

Abdullah, Mena 1930– Australian poet and short-story writer who explores the overt tensions and hidden delights of an Indian upbringing in rural Australia. Born in Bundarra, New South Wales, to sheep-farming immigrant parents, she was among the first in the country to write of ethnic difference at a time when the White Australia Policy was still active. 'The Red Koran' (1954), her first published poem, draws on the disparity between location and inheritance to inform the bush ballad with Indian folklore. Appearing in the *Bulletin* in 1954, it was anthologized in *Australian Poetry* (1955) as was her poem 'The Prison' (1957).

Her elliptical short stories are vivid with landscape and tradition and tell of the quest for identity and enchantment in an unfamiliar land. 'What was to be done with a dark-faced Indian child who was a second-generation Australian?' asks 'Grandfather Tiger' (1956). Although all but three of her stories – collected in *The Time of the Peacock* (1965) – were 'in collaboration with' the poet, Ray Mathew, it is generally thought that he was more an influence than a co-author. JAH

Abra (1978) JOAN BARFOOT'S first book, later reissued in Britain as *Gaining Ground* (1980), won the Books in Canada First Novel Award. Dealing with the betrayals of domesticity, it shows the female protagonist searching for an identity separate from that of her husband and family. Although conditioned to be dependent, and even though nothing is more frightening than freedom and uncertainty, Abra nevertheless flees a world in which her sole function seems to be circumscribed by a socially constructed role of wife and mother. Leaving the suburban security of husband and children, she goes to live in an isolated cabin, free from human contact, clocks and mirrors. Through a chosen life of self-sufficiency and the immediacy of living in close contact with nature, Abra gains physical strength and sharpened senses. Once deeply in touch with herself, she is ready and able to re-evaluate her life and account for her actions when her daughter tracks her down. In this women-centred fiction, Barfoot, in REALISTIC and intense detail, shows the protagonist's achievement of the inner peace and strength that formerly eluded her. SM/PRH

Acker, Kathy 1948–97 Avant-garde American novelist, *enfant terrible* of the subcultural POSTMODERN scene. Acker grew up in the midst of the counter-culture: in New York, mixing with the FLUXUS group and underground film-makers and studying Classics at Brandeis University, then on the West Coast, where she continued her studies at the University of California at San Diego and was married to Peter Gordon (actually her second marriage) in the seventies. During this period she had various jobs, ranging from secretary to sex show performer.

Often dubbed a 'punk' novelist, her early trilogy, comprising *The Childlike Life of the Black Tarantula* (1973), *I Dreamt I Was a Nymphomaniac: Imagining* (1974) and *The Adult Life of Toulouse Lautrec* (1975), constructs an aggressive, vulnerable, abject persona out of disparate materials: fiction, poetry, pornography, film, true lives and childhood memories. William Burroughs is a strong influence, along with Sade, Bataille, the surrealists and the *nouveau romanciers*. In the 1980s Acker divided her time between London and Paris. *Great Expectations* (1982), a schizophrenically cracked BILDUNGSROMAN, and *BLOOD AND GUTS IN HIGH*

THE
ENGLISH BREAD-BOOK.



"In no way, perhaps, is the progress of a nation in civilisation more unequivocally shown, than in the improvement which it realises in the food of the community."

Eliza Acton: title-page of *English Bread Book* ('In no way, perhaps, is the progress of a nation in civilisation more unequivocally shown, than in the improvement it realises in the food of the community'), 1857.

SCHOOL (1984), the picaresque confessions of a whore who meets up with Jean Genet, attracted mainstream attention, including charges of plagiarism and pornography. At this time she also diversified into other media, writing the screenplay for the film *Variety* (1983) and the libretto for an opera, *The Birth of the Poet* (1985). Her work isn't always hostile to narrative; *EMPIRE OF THE SENSELESS* (1988) and the earlier *Kathy Goes to Haiti* (1978) are shaped by relatively accessible plots. Stories and fragments from her career are collected in *Hannibal Lecter, My Father* (1991). Acker may be viewed as a formalist exploiting the death of the author or a frighteningly compulsive seeker-after-identity within the patriarchal symbolic. She died of cancer at the age of forty-nine.

MO'D

Ackland, Valentine [Mary Kathleen Macrory Ackland; 'Molly Turpin'] 1906–68 British poet who strode about her Dorset home in breeches with a rifle. Her trade-mark Eton crop was the result of an act of defiance on the morning of her disastrous brief marriage to Richard Turpin. Ackland's confident personality hid insecurity about her work: her verse was

loose-formed and slight, and her output was small. She became convinced that she could only write 'properly' when experiencing emotional despair, a conviction that conflicted with the happiness she found after 1930 in her 'marriage' to novelist and poet SYLVIA TOWNSEND WARNER. Together they produced *Whether a Dove or a Seagull*, dedicated to Valentine's hero, Robert Frost, who was embarrassed by it. The individual poems were left anonymous, but this failed to deflect critical attention from their authorship, with unfortunate consequences for the lesser writer. Valentine's later life was characterized by restless searching after meaning, in human rights issues, religion and love-affairs.

JLB

Acton, Eliza 1799–1859 Considered Britain's first modern cookery writer because of the exactness of her recipes, which remain eminently practical today. She was both educator and food reformer, ahead of her time in advocating healthy eating and simple cooking. Her work remained in print until 1918 when ousted by that of MRS ISABELLA BEETON.

Eliza grew up in Ipswich in East Anglia where her father was a partner in a brewery and wine business. Aged 18, Eliza and a friend founded a boarding school in Suffolk, offering 'a course of education combining elegance and utility with economy'. She left after four years, though she may have begun writing poetry at this time for some was published during the 1820s. Ill health led to her living in France where she developed a lifelong admiration for French cooking. It's thought she became engaged to a French officer whose infidelity caused her to return home, possibly with an illegitimate daughter who was brought up by her sister.

During the 1830s Eliza approached her publisher with 'further fugitive verses' but Mr Longman suggested she write a COOKERY BOOK instead. *Modern Cookery, in all its Branches* (1845) was the result. In 1855 an expanded edition appeared, *Modern Cookery for Private Families*, described by ELIZABETH DAVID as 'the greatest cookery book in our language'; in its preface the author complains of being much plagiarized. Eliza's only other work, *The English Bread Book* (1857), was published just two years before her death in London due to premature old age.

GH

Adam[s], Jane [Jean] 1710–65 British poet and teacher born in Renfrewshire, Scotland. Being orphaned at an early age she went into domestic service for a local minister, using his library to educate herself. Her religious poems, often deeply pious and didactic, were collected and published in Glasgow in 1734 as *Miscellany Poems, by Mrs Jane Adams, in Crawforddyke*. Her enthusiasm for ameliorating the social position of women was evinced by her founding of a girls' school in Scotland. She was reported to have

closed this for six weeks in order to walk to London to meet Samuel Richardson, whose *Clarissa* had so moved her. She died in Glasgow's poorhouse, having been admitted as an impoverished vagrant. Much of her work has been ignored since her death, and she remains best known for being the supposed author of the song, much admired by Burns, 'There's nae luck about the house'.

ELER

Adam Bede (1859) Extraordinarily popular when it first appeared, this novel by GEORGE ELIOT is set in the Midlands at the beginning of the 19th century. Its scenes of rural life and detailed characterization have often led it to be described as a quintessentially 'REALIST' novel, along with Eliot's other works.

The plot is based around four main characters: Adam Bede, the village carpenter, Hetty Sorrel, the woman he loves, Arthur Donnithorne, the local squire, and Dinah, the methodist preacher. The relationship of Hetty, who is seduced by flattery and attention, with Arthur reaches a tragic conclusion when she is imprisoned for infanticide, and 'some fatal influence seems to have shut up her heart against her fellow-creatures'. Like other novels by Eliot, *Adam Bede* was conceived as a moral book in which all the main characters learn through suffering, so that Adam becomes worthy enough to marry the caring Dinah, Arthur comprehends the consequences of his actions, and Hetty's confessional to Dinah allows her to both give and receive forgiveness.

RDM

Adam-Smith, Patsy (Patricia Jean) 1924– Australian author best known for her popular historical and autobiographical works. Established her name with *Hear the Train Blow* (1964), an account of her childhood in rural Victoria, where her father worked as a railway fettler and her mother as a station-mistress. Two subsequent books, *There was a Ship* (1967) and *Goodbye Girlie* (1994), have extended her life story, covering her time with the Voluntary Aid Detachment during World War II, her six years as the first woman articulated as an able seaman on an Australian coastal trader, and her later experiences living in the outback. Her time working in adult education in Hobart and as a manuscripts field officer for the State Library of Victoria led to an interest in writing the life stories of others, especially of people working in extreme conditions. These include *Moonbird People* (1965), *Outback Heroes* (1981) and *The Shearers* (1982). She has also produced several works relating to Australian war-time experiences, including *The Anzacs* (1978), *Australian Women at War* (1984) and *Prisoners of War: From Gallipoli to Korea* (1992). In addition, she has written or edited several histories and other studies of the railways of Australia as well as works based on Tasmanian history, such as *Heart of*

Exile (1986), on the Irish political prisoners sent there in the early 19th century. Adam-Smith describes her life and her writing as being driven by a need for independence and freedom, which is 'the sweetest thing and I ran headlong into it'.

EW

Adams, Abigail Smith 1744–1818 Wife of John Adams, second president of the United States from 1797 to 1801. Married in 1764, she bore four children who survived to adulthood: Abigail (b. 1765), John Quincy (b. 1767, US president 1825–9), Charles (b. 1770) and Thomas (b. 1772). Consistent with the cultural norms of her era, Adams regarded writing for a public audience as inappropriate for a woman; her considerable private correspondence, however, much of which was addressed to her husband during the long separations occasioned by his responsibilities as a statesman, offers a unique insider's view of the events that led to the establishment of the new nation and is commonly regarded by historians as the most thorough accounting of the Revolutionary period available from a woman's perspective.

Her most celebrated letter was written to her husband in 1776 after she learned he would take part in crafting the Declaration of Independence. She points out the problematic paradox of the Southern congressional delegates' simultaneous advocacy of liberty and defence of slavery and then writes, '[I]n the new Code of Laws which I suppose it will be necessary for you to make I desire you would Remember the Ladies . . . Do not put such unlimited power into the hands of the Husbands. Remember all Men would be tyrants if they could. If . . . attention is not paid to the Ladies we are determined to foment a Rebellion, and will not hold ourselves bound by any Laws in which we have no voice, or Representation.' The letter's humorous tone and sophisticated consideration of political issues suggest the egalitarian nature of the couple's relationship. Adams's letters to her husband, along with her voluminous correspondence with friends and family, provide an early look at an American women's literary tradition that links gender equity with the national political morality.

VC

Adams, Anna 1926– British poet born in West London who celebrates the force of nature and writes with a remarkable empathy for the natural and human worlds. Adams trained as an artist and ceramicist at Harrow Art School and Hornsey College of Art. She worked as an art teacher, casual farm labourer and pottery designer, and divides her time between Horton-in-Ribblesdale and London. Her work distrusts both biography and the personal pronoun – a calculated and impassioned aesthetic which draws strength from the examples of the poets ELIZABETH BISHOP and Charles Tomlinson. She published A

Journey Through Winter in 1969 and has pursued a prolific career since. Her rate of productivity is driven by a high-pressured awareness of mortality. In the very moving *A Reply to Intercepted Mail (A Verse Letter to W.H. Auden)* (1979), she tells how, following a sudden life-threatening illness in 1960, she 'begged for time', the medicine partly being 'poetry'. The qualities inherent in the prose of *Island Chapters* (1991) and *Life on Limestone* (1994) are her ear for the cadences of speech, precise observation, wit and compassion. These skills become even more concentrated in her poetry. She published *Green Resistance: New and Selected Poems*, in 1996. DM

Adams, Glenda 1940– Australian novelist and short-story writer, born and educated in Sydney. She studied languages at the University of Sydney, before travelling first to Indonesia and then settling in New York in 1964, where she studied creative writing at Columbia University. Adams taught fiction-writing in New York and travelled in Europe, remaining an expatriate until her return to Sydney in 1990. Adams has written several novels, including *The Tempest of Clemenza* (1996), *Longleg* (1990), *Dancing on Coral* (1987) and *Games of the Strong* (1982), in addition to two collections of short stories, *The Hottest Night of the Century* (1979) and *Lies and Stories* (1976). She has won several major Australian literary prizes, including the 1987 Miles Franklin and New South Wales Premier's awards for *Dancing on Coral*, and the 1991 Banjo Award and 1990 Age Book of the Year Award for *Longleg*. Adams has written in both NATURALISTIC and highly stylized modes, with *Games of the Strong* and some stories from *The Hottest Night of the Century* using experimental and allegorical forms. These elements are uncomfortably combined in her novel, *The Tempest of Clemenza*, which follows the emotional relationship of a mother and her dying adolescent daughter as they pursue their lives in the USA, while at the same time telling a GOTHIC and highly layered tale of the mother's own upbringing in Australia. MLA

Adams, Hannah 1755–1831 American writer, historian. Considered the first professional American writer, Hannah grew up in Medfield, Massachusetts, and came to her scholarship through economic necessity and intense curiosity. Educated at home because of poor health and her father's financial difficulties, Adams read every book in her father's library and even learned Greek and Latin from the occasional boarders her father took in. During the Revolutionary War she helped support her family by making lace and tutoring, but also began laboriously researching theology and history. For a long time the only woman allowed in the Boston Athenaeum, she was so intense in her studies that the librarian claimed he often could not induce her to leave during his lunch hour. Adams's

first book, *A Compendium of the Various Sects Which Have Appeared From the Beginning of the Christian Era to the Present Day* (1784), was her answer to Broughton's terribly biased *Dictionary of Religions*. Adams's book sold out its subscription list, but her contract returned most of the money to her publisher. Subsequent editions, printed under shrewder contracts, increased her income and allowed her to compile several expanded editions. Research for her *Summary History of New England* (1799) was so demanding that it caused her temporary blindness. The volume was a comprehensive history from the Mayflower to the Constitution, which she was in the process of abridging as a textbook for sale to schools when Jedidiah Morse published his own textbook version. The result was a ten-year litigation, with heated theological and philosophical battles, which ended in 1814 in Adams's favour. Following *The Truth and Excellence of the Christian Religion* (1804), a series of portraits of exemplary Christian laymen, she published the sympathetic *History of the Jews* (1812). Her final work, *Memoir* (1832), was written to support her ailing younger sister. SP

Adams, Sarah Flower 1805–48 Poet and hymn-writer, born at Great Harlow, Essex. When her father died in 1829 she lived with the family of W.J. Fox, and contributed articles to his literary journal, the *Monthly Repository*. In 1834 she married William Bridges Adams. Her principal work, *Vivia Perpetua, a Dramatic Poem*, a play about its heroine's conversion to Christianity, was published in 1841 and a long poem in ballad metre, entitled 'The Royal Progress', appeared in the *Illuminated Magazine* for 1845.

She wrote numerous unpublished poems on social and political subjects and composed several hymns which were set to music by her sister, and used in the services at Finsbury Chapel. She was drawn to dramatic writing and even considered acting as a profession, but much of her work was devotional and lyrical rather than dramatic in form. She is best known for her hymn 'Nearer, my God, to Thee'. RS

Adcock, Fleur 1934– New Zealand poet, editor, translator. She gained an MA in Classics from Victoria University of Wellington, New Zealand. Having had an English childhood, Adcock made Britain her permanent home in 1963, and worked as a professional librarian for the Foreign and Commonwealth Office in England until 1979. In 1996 she was awarded the OBE for her contribution to New Zealand literature.

Although frequently cited for its cool restraint, Adcock's detached voice is distilled from an underlying emotional intensity. Her subject matter spans personal relationships and ecological, political, historical and gender concerns. She uses an assured lyrical voice and biting wit:

I write in praise of the solitary act:
of not feeling a trespassing tongue
forced into one's mouth, one's breath
smothered, nipples crushed against the
ribcage, and that metallic tingling
in the chin set off by a certain odd nerve . . .

There is much to be said for abandoning
this no longer novel exercise –
for not ‘participating in
a total experience’ – when
one feels like the lady in Leeds who
had seen *The Sound of Music* eighty-six times ...
(‘Against Coupling’)

An early interest in FAIRY TALE and allegory (*The Eye of the Hurricane* (1964) and *Tigers* (1967)) shifted to realistic documentations of urban and domestic scenes,

Much of Adcock's work uses the perspective of the ambivalent outsider – a position overtly aligned to issues of immigration and national identity, from *High Tide in the Garden* (1971) to *Time Zones* (1991), a title that refers both to geographical regions and to the hauntings of memory.

Her editorial and translation work intensified in the 1980s and 1990s, and included *The Oxford Book of Contemporary New Zealand Poetry* (1982), *The Faber Book of Twentieth Century Women's Poetry* (1987), Grete Tartler's *Oriental Express* (1989), Daniela Crăsnura's *Letters From Darkness* (1991), and (with Jacqueline Simms) *The Oxford Book of Creatures* (1995). The Eighties also saw the appearance of her *Selected Poems* (1983) and *The Incident Book* (1986), which retrospectively traces Adcock's role as outsider to its origins in her English childhood. *Looking Back* (1997) extends her fascination with personal and ancestral history.

EJN

5

in accordance with the free-thinking rejection of marriage. Adeline boldly and nobly defies the public odium until, after the death of Glenmurray, she is finally brought to see the error of her ways by the intervention of a Quaker. By the end of the novel she is able to die, reconciled to God and social convention.

The characters of Adeline Mowbray and Glenmurray have been widely identified with MARY WOLLSTONECRAFT and William Godwin, with whom Amelia Opie was intimate in the 1790s. While Adeline is sympathetically portrayed as moral but misguided, the novel can be seen as an attack on the Godwinian attitude to marriage. It has thus been allied to the reaction against radical, 'jacobin' ideas, despite its criticism of intolerance, bigotry and slavery. LBe

Adventures of David Simple, The (1744) SARAH FIELDING's first and most famous novel was praised for its 'vast Penetration into human Nature'. Acclaimed by Richardson, Johnson and the *BLUE-STOCKINGS*, it was included with other classics in the *Novelists Magazine* (1782) and commended in CLARA REEVE's *THE PROGRESS OF ROMANCE* (1785). However its sentimental philosophy, its emphasis on tender feelings and moral predicaments, and its pessimistic conclusion that selflessness is inevitably defeated by worldly ambition, delayed modern recognition. The guileless hero's quest to found an ideal community 'without any selfish and separate Interest' encounters self-seeking cynics and tragic set-backs. The only real survivor is Cynthia, whose spirited complaints that the intellectual aspirations of clever girls are thwarted, and that a wife is no more than an 'upper Servant', possibly echoed her author's own frustrations. Sarah's brother Henry wrote a complimentary preface and edited the second edition, which she followed with two sequels. LMT

African Laughter: Four Visits to Zimbabwe (1991) In this political TRAVEL NARRATIVE DORIS LESSING's ambivalence about her exile from Africa prompts a rethinking of time. Her desire to belong in Africa appears doomed to collide with the violence of the COLONIAL past and an eternal POST-COLONIAL present. Fracturing the linear colonial/post-colonial framework imposed on Africa's history enables an imaginative means of belonging.

African Laughter appears to be a straightforward REALIST excursion into four visits to Zimbabwe (1982–92). Although chapter divisions reflect the time periods of each visit, the simple device of merging time frames through retrospection and anticipation, of informed comment on events which occurred in her absence, creates a pervasive presence for the exiled self which enables a kind of belonging. Lessing's fascina-

tion with Zimbabwe's rock formations offers a more complex questioning of time. The rupturing of 'historical time' through the medium of 'ageless' geographical features alludes to an elusive relationship with landscape beyond the dynamics of ownership and appropriation. It hints at an ambivalent aesthetics of desire encompassing the yearning, both for time as a referent in the making of identities, and for its opposite, the negation of time to free the self. C-AM

Age of Innocence, The (1920) EDITH WHARTON's Pulitzer-Prize-winning novel describes the disillusionment of its thoughtful, conformist hero with the stifling manners and mores of 19th-century New York society. The significantly named Newland Archer marries the charming but conventional May and, believing that 'Women should be free . . . as free as we are', he unsuccessfully attempts to raise her out of their trivial and confined sphere only to discover instead his increasing attraction to her disgraced cousin, Countess Ellen Olenska. Vibrant with thwarted passions and necessary renunciations, prompted by a refusal to 'behave like people in novels', the relationship between Newland and Ellen nevertheless owes something to Henry James's microcosmic representations of the stormy FIN DE SIÈCLE affair between the civilizations of Puritan, young America and of ancient, decadent Europe, although the 'innocence' of the younger culture is shown throughout the novel to be only mythical. By the end of the novel an older, widowed Newland reflects on the liberating potential of rapid technological and cultural change, but, crippled by the values of the old society, he ultimately renounces Ellen. MM

Agnes Grey (1847) ANNE BRONTË's first novel, published under the pseudonym 'Acton Bell', depicts the life of a clergyman's daughter whose circumstances force her to become a governess. The first-person narrative presents an uncompromising satire on middle-class social behaviour, exemplified by two families, the Bloomfields and the Murrays. Their moral vacuity, self-indulgence and habitual failure to support their governesses in matters of discipline are contrasted with Agnes's own strict and unyielding ethical attitudes. The protagonist finally finds happiness through marriage with Mr Weston, the curate, who has always stood by her through her years of servitude. The book was partly inspired by Brontë's own experience as a governess to the Ingham family at Blake Hall, Mirfield, in 1839, where she was unfairly dismissed after only one year, and to the Robinson family at Thorpe Green Hall between 1841 and 1845. In the Preface of the second edition of her later book *THE TENANT OF WILDFELL HALL*, Brontë vigorously defends this outspoken portrayal of the deprivations of the governess class. NBP

Aguilar, Grace 1816–47 British novelist. Aguilar was the first woman to write in English about Judaism. Enormously popular, many of her works were translated into foreign languages. Educated at home by her Spanish immigrant parents, Aguilar was ill and, by some accounts, dominated by her mother for most of her short life. Seven of Aguilar's novels were published posthumously by Sarah Dias Fernandes Aguilar. By looking at composition rather than publication dates, Aguilar's writing career can be divided into three phases. The first one is of Historical ROMANCE. This includes *Vale of Cedars*, a romance set during the Inquisition. The central characters are practising Jews who must hide their faith behind both a metaphorical veil and a literal vale (a valley of cedars). Her second phase is translation, theology and BIOGRAPHY. It is this phase that has garnered the most critical attention. These works include *Israel Defended* (1838), a translation from the French on the emancipation question; *The Spirit of Judaism* (1842) which explores the humanistic spirit anchoring Jewish rituals; and *Women of Israel* (1844), a collective biography of women who appear in the Bible and the Talmud. This last work was still being given as a Sunday School prize as late as the 1950s. Her final phase is one of moral and DOMESTIC FICTION. Her two most popular works come from this time: *Home Influence* (1847) and *A Mother's Recompense* (1851). In these works, Aguilar seems to be advocating both the Victorian ideal of motherhood and the restricted freedom of women. RB-S

Aidoo, Ama Ata [Christina] 1942– Ghanaian playwright, novelist, short-story writer and poet, born in the Fanti-speaking region of Central Ghana. She studied and later taught at the University of Ghana, was Minister for Education in the Ghanaian government in the 1980s, and has also lived and taught in Zimbabwe and the United States. While at the University of Ghana in 1964 she produced her first play, *Dilemma of a Ghost*, which dramatizes a young African-American woman's search for a homeland and the conflict between her western individualism and an African emphasis on community and family. Aidoo's second play, *Anowa* (1969), takes up similar issues in a 19th-century Ghanaian setting and in terms of the conflict between a young African woman's desire for romance and equality and her husband's quest for status and wealth. Both plays focus on women who desire to be sisters and comrades, and both set that female desire for equality and comradeship in the context of slavery and inequalities of wealth and class. Aidoo's drama and fictions draw on an innovative mixture of African and European (especially Brechtian) techniques in their use of dialogue, chorus, music and oral story-telling.

Aidoo is now better known in Europe and North

America for her fiction. Her collection of short stories, *No Sweetness Here* (1970), is remarkable for the variety of its styles, techniques and narrative voices, frequently of rural men and women whose lives have been disrupted by colonization, war and racism. Her experimental novel, *OUR SISTER KILLJOY: Confessions of a Black-Eyed Squint* (1977), explores the ways in which language, western education and the glamour of material goods from the West seduce the younger generation of Ghanaians. Aidoo's fiction engages with issues which are crucially important to the health and identity of the emerging Ghanaian nation, but they do so with a lively humour, compassion and subtlety unusual in writing from Ghana.

In the 1980s and 1990s, Aidoo published two collections of poems, *Someone Talking to Sometime* (1985) and *An Angry Letter in January* (1992), and a number of children's books. Yet another change in style and direction was signalled by a ROMANCE, *Changes* (1991), awarded the 1992 Commonwealth Writers Prize for Best Book (Africa), which explores the dilemmas of contemporary urban professional women in Ghana. CLI

Aiken, Joan (Delano) 1924– British writer of historical ROMANCES, thrillers and imaginative adventure-fiction for children (see CHILDREN'S BOOKS). Born in Sussex, the daughter of American poet Conrad Aiken, she was educated at home and read widely (especially AUSTEN, Scott, the BRONTËS, Dickens and Poe, whose influences are apparent). She supported her children as a copy-writer after her first husband died in 1955, before winning acclaim for several juvenile mysteries including *The Wolves of Willoughby Chase* (1962), a FAIRY TALE set in a Britain ruled by descendants of Bonnie Prince Charlie and haunted by ravening wolves. Many stories rely on fantasy and magic: *A Necklace of Raindrops and Other Stories* (1968) features egg-laying houses and flying pies baked with sky. Her adult novels of intrigue (*A Cluster of Separate Sparks*, 1972) and regency romances (*The Five-Minute Marriage*, 1977) indulge the romance of place. She has written four companion books to the novels of Jane Austen. (*Eliza's Daughter* (1994) invents a story for Willoughby's misguided victim from *PRIDE AND PREJUDICE*; *Emma Watson* (1996) rewrites Austen's fragment, *The Watsons*.) Recent children's fiction (*Cold Shoulder Road*, 1995) continues familiar themes of mysterious disappearances, child abduction and miraculous rescue. Aiken remarried and lives in Sussex and New York. LDO

Albatross Muff, The (1977) BARBARA HANRAHAN'S 'fantastic' novel troubles Dickensian England with a lost dreamscape of Australia. Mama, daughter Stella and ex-convict maid Moak travel from Australia, after Stella's father falls from his horse and becomes a bloodied corpse, to the oppressively gendered and

class-ridden world of Victorian England. Here Mama's friend Pensa languishes on a couch, giving birth to a series of babies that disappoint if they are girls and die if they are boys. Albatross, shot on the voyage, cast a malign shadow over events: girls lapse into madness, there are numerous deaths, and Stella, antipodean and therefore vulnerable, becomes the victim of a predatory patriarch in her quest to recover the perfect body of the father. Throughout, deformed and diseased bodies resist the Victorian ideal, and slums lurk around the corner from 'well-groomed' London, though an idyllic female space in Wales offers refuge. Edith, a Mariner figure, writes to 'soothe the past': through her and references to Coleridge, Dickens and CHARLOTTE BRONTË, Hanrahan plays with literariness, confusing the distinctions between real and imaginary, magical and rational. CM

Alcott, Louisa May 1832–88 American novelist and short-story writer. Nothing in her early life could have prepared Alcott for the success she eventually achieved with the publication of *LITTLE WOMEN*. As the daughter of the Transcendentalist philosopher Amos Bronson Alcott she was brought up within the formidably high-minded milieu of the 19th-century Massachusetts intelligentsia, and was principally taught at home by her father in preference to an orthodox schooling. She herself began a career in teaching in order to shield her family from the effects of Bronson Alcott's eccentric improvidence. When their circumstances worsened she took in sewing and worked as a general maid, before volunteering as a Union Army nurse at the outbreak of the Civil War.

During this period she began to write a series of violently SENSATIONAL magazine stories – 'I think my natural ambition', she declared, 'is for the lurid style. I indulge in gorgeous fancies and wish that I dared set them before the public.' Employing various pseudonyms, Alcott continued to produce such adult fare, with its murderous, drug-addicted heroines, long after she had made her reputation as a children's writer. The nature of this dual identity was only exposed during the 1940s, when Madeleine Stern and Leona Rostenberg successfully penetrated her various literary disguises.

After the Civil War, Alcott made the first of several visits to Europe, where she tried unsuccessfully to interest a London publisher in the manuscript which eventually became *Little Women*. Published in 1868, the novel, set against a background of a Yankee household managed by the mother while the father is absent fighting for the Union, was instantly popular, providing the author with the affluence and security earlier denied her. Just as Marmee, wise, benign matriarch of the March family, is based on Alcott's mother, so her four daughters – socially adventurous Meg, artistic

Amy, angelic Beth, and Jo, whose literary hankerings are buoyed up by irrepressible high spirits – are all in some sense autobiographical refractions, or else based on Alcott family originals. To Jo, most plainly her creator's *alter ego*, three more books – *GOOD WIVES*, *Little Men* and *Jo's Boys* – were devoted, and though Alcott claimed to be tiring of 'providing moral pap for the young', her fame continues to rest securely on her achievements in this genre.

Despite obvious concessions to mid 19th-century sentimentality, her stories are firmly grounded in contemporary American life, never demanding that we view their heroines as anything more than ordinary girls of their period. Identification and republication of Alcott's adult potboilers, including a recently discovered novel, *The Chase*, have created a fresh context for feminist criticism of her writings for the young. JK

Alden, Isabella (Macdonald) [Pansy] 1841–1930 American CHILDREN'S author and popular religious novelist. She was born in Rochester, New York, and educated by her father and at boarding schools. After publishing her first story in a local paper at the age of 10, she set out as a schoolgirl to explain Christianity to children in *Helen Lester*, which won a prize from the Christian Tract Society and was published under her penname 'Pansy' in 1865. In 1866 she married Presbyterian minister Gustavus R. Alden. They had a son whose ill health prompted them to move first to Winter Park, Florida, and later to Palo Alto, California. Alden was active in the Sunday School movement, the Young People's Society for Christian Endeavour, the Chautauqua movement, and the Women's Christian Temperance Union. In addition to writing for and editing several religious magazines, she wrote or edited nearly 150 books, most of them for children. Her Chautauqua novels, beginning with *Four Girls at Chautauqua* (1876), helped to establish Christian summer camps. Her most popular novels were a series based on her own experiences *Ester Ried: Asleep and Awake* (1870), *Ester Ried Yet Speaking* (1883), and *Ester Ried's Namesake* (1906), but the works considered her most important were a life of Christ, *The Prince of Peace* (1890), and a retelling of Christ's life in a modern setting, *Yesterday, Framed in To-Day* (1898). By 1900 her books were selling worldwide, translated into many languages, at the rate of 100,000 per year. Alden left an unfinished autobiography, *Memories of Yesterday*, completed by her niece Grace Livingston Hill. JSG

Aldrich, Bess (Streeter) [Margaret Dean Stevens] 1881–1954 American novelist and short-story writer. Daughter of pioneer settlers, she was born in Cedar Falls, Iowa, attended local schools and the Iowa state teachers' college, and taught for six years in Iowa and Utah. In 1907 she married Charles S. Aldrich, a



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O LORD DON'T LET TODE EVER TOUCH A DROP OF RUM! Page 20.

Isabella Alden: 'O Lord don't let Tode ever touch a drop of rum!', illustration from *Three People*, 1873.

banker and lawyer, with whom she settled in Elmwood, Nebraska, and had four children. She began publishing short stories in 1911 and after her husband died, in 1925, she wrote to support the family. Her ten novels, beginning with *The Rim of the Prairie* (1925), concentrate on the settlement of the Mississippi Valley region. In her bestselling *A Lantern in Her Hand* (1928), Aldrich pays tribute to her pioneer mother. The heroine of *Miss Bishop* (1933; filmed 1941) dedicates her life to teaching after being disappointed in love. *Song of Years* (1939) chronicles the growth of Cedar Falls into an industrial city. The title character of *The Lieutenant's Lady* (1942) is a 19th-century army wife living on the frontier. Aldrich wrote over 150 short stories concentrating on small-town family life, collected in *The Man Who Caught the Weather* (1936), *Journey into Christmas* (1949), *The Bess Streeter Aldrich Reader* (1950) and *A Bess Streeter Aldrich Treasury* (1959). JSG

Aldrich, Mildred [H. Quinn] 1853–1928 American journalist born in Providence, Rhode Island, and raised in Boston. After graduating from high school in 1872, she taught in an elementary school in Boston. She wrote for the *Boston Home Journal*, *Arena*, the *Boston Journal* and the *Boston Herald*, and founded and edited

The Mahogany Tree, a weekly journal of ideas. By 1904 she had moved to France and was supporting herself as a foreign correspondent for American magazines. She also translated French plays into English and negotiated rights for US productions of French plays. In 1914 she moved to a cottage in Huiry outside Paris, from which she wrote eyewitness accounts of the Battle of the Marne. These are collected in *A Hilltop on the Marne* (1915), a bestseller considered her most important work. Other writing about World War I appears in *On the Edge of the War Zone* (1917), *The Peak of the Load* (1918), *When Johnny Comes Marching Home* (1919) and her Foreword to *The Letters of Thomasine Atkins (WAAC) On Active Service* (1918). *Told in a French Garden* (1914) is a collection of stories told in imitation of Boccaccio. Aldrich received the French Légion d'Honneur in 1922 for influencing the US to enter the war. A close friend of GERTRUDE STEIN and ALICE B. TOKLAS, she appears in Stein's *THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF ALICE B. TOKLAS* (1932). JSG

Aleramo, Sibilla 1876–1960 Pseudonym of Rina Faccio, Italian writer, poet, political and social activist, who became known throughout Europe with her novel, *Una Donna* (1906; *A Woman at Bay*, 1908) the semi-autobiographical account of her marriage to an abusive husband and her eventual decision to leave, which meant the loss of her son. A controversial and

shocking novel for its time, it was compared to Ibsen's *A Doll's House*. Aleramo had been seduced by a worker, Ulderico Pierangeli, at Porto Civitanova Marche where she was employed as a book-keeper, and forced into marriage in 1893. Aleramo did not write another novel until 1919, *Il Passaggio*, which was a revision of *Una Donna*, and included details of her affair with the writer Giovanni Cena. She then published a collection of her poetry, *Momenti* (1920), and two volumes from her JOURNALS, *Diario di una donna: Inediti 1945-60* and *Un amore insolito: Inediti 1940-44*, were published posthumously in 1979 and 1978 respectively, as well as essays concerned with female subjectivity and autonomy. Although she was known in the Italian press chiefly for her love-affairs with other writers, Aleramo became an activist for political and social change, travelling to Eastern-bloc countries at the behest of the Italian Communist party.

SD

Alexander, Cecil Frances 1818–95 Religious poet and hymn-writer, the author of 'There is a green hill far away . . .', the carol 'Once in Royal David's City', and 'All things Bright and Beautiful'. Her family owned large estates in County Wicklow and County Tyrone in Ireland. Her brothers went to Oxford and she and her sisters were educated at home. As a young woman, she wrote a book of stories with Harriet Howard, the daughter of Lord Wicklow. She was committed to the High Anglican views of the Oxford Movement and wrote pamphlets for Newman and Keble as well as books of verse and prose for children. In 1850 she married William Alexander, rector of Termonamongan in County Tyrone (later Archbishop of Armagh and Primate of All Ireland), and later bore four children. When her husband was created Bishop of Derry and Raphoe, Frances set up a home for fallen women there.

RS

Alexander, Meena 1951– Indian poet, novelist, essayist and critic. Born in Allahabad, into a Christian family, the author moved to Sudan with her family at the age of 5. She began writing poetry and publishing at a very early age. When she was 17, she went to the English Midlands, to Nottingham, where she completed a Ph.D. on *Women in Romanticism*, published in 1989. Later she returned to India to teach in Delhi and Hyderabad. In 1979 she married an American and moved to New York, to teach creative writing at Columbia University, and Women's Studies at Hunter College.

She has published many volumes of poetry including *The Bird's Bright Ring* (1976), *I Root My Name* (1977), *Stone Roots* (1980), *House of a Thousand Doors* (1988) and *River and Bridge* (1995). Much of her poetry deals with the issues of origins, displacement and female identity. She is highly praised for the intense lyrical quality of

her writing. She has also written several novels. The first one, *Nampally Road* (1991), is a short novel set entirely in India. *FAULT LINES* (1994), her best book so far, is a memoir in which Alexander creates her leading figuration of the 'fault lines'. These are areas of fraction created by multiple uprootings through countries, languages and time.

In *The Shock of Arrival. Reflections on Postcolonial Experience* (1996), Alexander further explores the condition of migration and cultural displacement, fusing poetry, prose and critical thinking. Her novel *Manhattan Music* (1997) has an autobiographical content, and it narrates her life as a diasporic Indian writer, a married woman and a mother, a professor and a poet in the multicultural New York of the 1990s.

SPo

Alexander, Mrs [Annie French Hector] 1825–1902 Originally from Ireland, this well-travelled author wrote over forty novels, many dealing unadornedly with matters of kinship, inheritance and obsession with money. *The Snare of the Fowler* (1892) details both the disappointment of someone who narrowly misses a large legacy and the predicament of a supposed heir dispossessed when he discovers that a woman, initially thought to be illegitimate, is entitled to inherit. Similarly, *Her Dearest Foe* (1876) is about a property dispute, though the dispute is resolved when the two combatants marry.

The young Annie French travelled extensively with her parents before they finally settled in London. However, it seems that, on marrying the explorer, merchant and archaeologist Alexander Hector in 1858, her nomadic life continued. She claimed to have written nothing between marriage and her husband's death in 1875. However, her best-known novel, *The Wooing o't*, was published in 1873.

As a widow, she wrote to support her four children and once again travel was on the agenda. The family lived in France and Germany in 1876–82 and in St Andrews in 1882–5, the former locations providing material for novels such as *The Frères* (1882). Her final novel, *Kitty Costello* (1904), is semi-autobiographical.

EMH

Alford, Edna 1947– Canadian short-story writer, editor and teacher whose conventional REALIST stories scrutinize their characters' apparently mundane lives. Alford grew up in a working-class neighbourhood of Saskatoon where she went to school, before marrying and having a son. Her literary career began around the time she won a scholarship at 15 to attend a summer writing programme in Saskatchewan, and includes short-story collections: *A Sleep Full of Dreams* (1981), for which she was named co-winner of the Gerald Lampert Award, and *The Garden of*

Eloise Loon (1986). In addition to her own writing, Alford has contributed significantly to the development of other writers in Canada through her involvement with *Dandelion*, the literary magazine she co-founded and co-edited with JOAN CLARK (1975–80), with the aim of giving young writers in the prairie region greater access to publication. More recently she was appointed fiction editor of *Grain* magazine (1990). She has also edited short-fiction collections by Canadian writers such as Bonnie Burnard and Rachel Wyatt; co-edited the anthology of women's writing, *Kitchen Talk*, with CLAIRE HARRIS; and taught creative writing throughout western Canada. She is a member of the editorial board of Coteau Books and is Associate Director of the Writing Studio Program at the Banff Center for the Arts. On the subject of producing works of art or what Alford describes as 'home-made light' she states, 'I don't actually believe that I create. It seems to me that what I do is behold. And in some sense, I guess I am responding to the human longing to behold.'

SEP

Alias Grace (1996) In her ninth novel, MARGARET ATWOOD makes a fictional return to her fascination with early Canadian history and her former 'heroine', SUSANNA MOODIE. During her visits to the Provincial Penitentiary in Kingston and Toronto's Lunatic Asylum, Moodie wrote of Canada's 'star attraction', the 'celebrated murderess', Grace Marks, convicted of the Kinnear-Montgomery murders in July 1843. Whilst Grace's accomplice, James McDermott, was hanged, she was imprisoned until her Pardon in 1872. Atwood takes such verifiable facts and extends the mystery of Grace's crime into the realms of historical fiction: 'I have not changed any known facts, although the written accounts are so contradictory that few facts emerge as unequivocally "known".' This is a novel which questions the truth of writing (and history) alongside the 'origins' of the female subject whose crime is seen to relate directly to issues of sexuality. Pre-Freudian medical speculations abound as to the origin of Grace's 'madness': Atwood's exploration of mesmerism and dream work reflects the 19th century's fascination with mental illness, whilst her POST-MODERN approach questions its textual validity. Grace's own story is sewn into a 'quilted' narrative, each section introduced by a different illustrative 'block' or pattern, hinting at past memories and future freedoms.

MRE

Alkali, Zaynab 1950– The first novelist to bring a Northern Nigerian female perspective to Nigerian literature. Born in Borno State, Northern Nigeria, her family had belonged to a devoutly Muslim ethnic group until her father moved the family to a predominantly Christian village shortly before her birth,

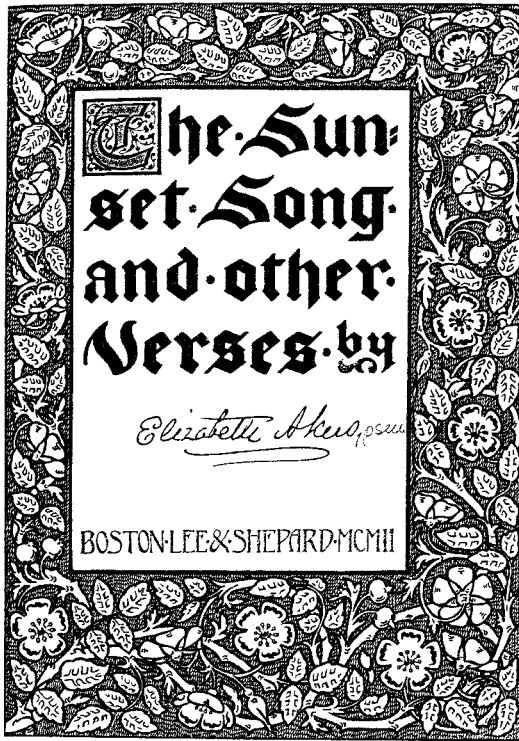
a fact reflected in the background of conflicting belief systems in her fiction. She graduated in English from Ahmadu Bello University in 1973, and took her MA in African Literature in English there in 1979. She is married with six children and lectures in English and African literature at the University of Maidiguri in Borno State. Through a detailed evocation of village ritual, routine and idiom, her first novel, *THE STILLBORN* (1984), charts the lives of its female protagonists in a period of cultural contradiction and confusion in gender roles. Of her second novel, *The Virtuous Woman*, (1986), she has said it was 'deliberately moralistic . . . I feel our children are in desperate need of morals.' In 1995, she co-edited an anthology of fiction and poetry, *Vultures in the Air: Voices from Northern Nigeria*.

WJB

All my Pretty Ones (1962) Nominated for a National Book Award in 1963, ANNE SEXTON's second volume of poetry explores experiences of death, loss and grief, signalled in the title words from Shakespeare's *Macbeth*. The poems attempt to fulfil Kafka's proposal, the epigraph to the volume, that books should arouse a suicidal urge within the reader, breaking the 'frozen sea within'. The opening poem, 'The Truth the Dead Know', begins this examination by dealing with Sexton's deceased parents. 'Lament' discloses a consequent desire to control death: 'I think I could have stopped it, / if I'd have been as firm as a nurse.' 'A Curse Against Elegies' berates those who disturb and idealize the dead; and 'Housewife' suggests death's many guises for women, killed into submission by society. The associated subjects of religion and spirituality are treated in 'Young', 'The Starry Night', and 'For God while Sleeping', attempting to go beyond existence into a mythological realm, alternately pursued in 'The Black Art' where poetry becomes a dark entrance to forbidden knowledge.

EM

All Passion Spent (1931) VITA SACKVILLE-WEST's portrait of recalcitrant old age is a mixture of polemic and fantasy. Although often considered a fictional expression of the constraints on women's creativity identified by VIRGINIA WOOLF in *A ROOM OF ONE'S OWN* (1929) (Sackville-West attended Woolf's 1928 Cambridge lectures, the genesis of that work), the novel also explores the conflict between private artistic fulfilment and public duty. Lady Slane, at 88, the recent widow of an eminent statesman, rejects, to their amazement, her family's 'sensible' plans for her remaining years. Renting a cottage in Hampstead, she surrounds herself with idiosyncratic elderly new acquaintances, and reviews her life. In her judgement, the thwarting of her youthful hopes of becoming a painter was not wholly attributable to gender politics,



COVER & TITLE PAGE DESIGNED BY GRACE BARTON ALLEN

Elizabeth Akers Allen: title-page of *The Sunset Song and Other Verses*, 1902.

but also to the contemporary 'rift between the worker and the dreamer'. A vast bequest from an eccentric admirer proves a final test of her integrity. The issues raised are leavened with lyrical reminiscences of travels in Persia and India, and passages of deliciously sly humour aimed at Lady Slane's all-too-grown-up, hypocritical children.

WAP

Allan, Mabel Esther 1915–98 Young people's author, who also wrote as 'Jean Estoril', 'Anne Pilgrim' and 'Priscilla Hagon'. Despite life-long eye problems, she published over 150 novels and more than 300 short stories, printed her poems, autobiography and TRAVEL accounts and maintained a lively correspondence with admirers worldwide. Born in Cheshire to a non-bookish family, bored by a perfunctory education in private schools, she nevertheless resolved extremely young to be an author. During World War II, working in the Women's Land Army, teaching in infant schools, and putting on displays of country dancing, she per-

sisted with her writing. After years frustrated by wartime publishing conditions, she saw *The Glen Castle Mystery* appear in 1948. Success allowed more of the travel which so enriched her novels (*The Background Came First*, 1988). She embraced many genres – including thrillers, adventures, the inner-city Liverpool 'Wood Street' books, BALLET NOVELS (most famously, the 'Drina' series) and progressive school stories, which she described as 'Self government, self discipline and no games' (*To Be An Author*, 1982). Always open to new ideas, she remained constant in her respect for individuals and her writing remained refreshingly free from pious orthodoxies.

PEK

Alleine, Theodosia d. before 1685 British memoirist, who was born in Somerset, the daughter of a preacher. After marrying a kinsman, radical minister Joseph Alleine, in 1659, they taught together at a school in Taunton until her husband's removal in 1662 under the Acts of Uniformity. Alleine's BIOGRAPHY of her husband describes his ensuing bouts of imprisonment and ill-health, and provides an interesting early account of the struggle between wifely obedience and the need for a loving companion: 'I know nothing I could complain of, but that he was so taken up, that I could have but very little converse with him.' Along with MARGARET CAVENDISH, DUCHESS OF NEWCASTLE, Alleine is remarkable for being one of the very few women in the 17th century to write her autobiography. This appeared in the composite *Life* in 1672.

RDM

Allen, Elizabeth (Chase) (Taylor) Akers [Florence Percy] 1832–1911 American poet and editor. She was born in Strong, Maine, and suffered abuse and neglect after her mother died when she was 4. Educated at Farmington Academy, she began working at the age of 13 and writing under the pseudonym 'Florence Percy' at the age of 15. In 1851 she married Marshall Taylor, whom she divorced after he abandoned her and their daughter. She became an assistant editor of the *Portland Transcript* and, following publication of her first book, *Forest Buds, from the Woods of Maine* (1856), regularly contributed to *Atlantic Monthly*. From 1859 to 1860 she travelled in Europe as a news correspondent. In 1860 she married Benjamin Akers, who died the following year. During the Civil War she worked as a government clerk in Washington and tended wounded soldiers. Her poem 'Rock Me to Sleep' (*Saturday Evening Post*, 1860), a plaintive cry to a dead mother, was set to music and gained widespread popularity during the war. She married Elijah Allen in 1864. Later verse was collected in *Silver Bridge* (1886), *The High Top Sweeting* (1891), and *The Sunset Song* (1902). Late in life she wrote an autobiography of her financial life, bitterly recounting how all her husbands exploited her.

JSG

Allen, Paula Gunn 1939– Native American poet, critic and novelist concerned with the re-establishment of the importance of women in Native American tradition. She was born into a multi-lingual family of Laguna Pueblo, Sioux, Scottish, German and Lebanese ancestry and is related to the writer LESLIE MARMON SILKO. She grew up in the land between the Laguna Pueblo and Acoma reservations in New Mexico. Educated at a convent school and at the Universities of California and New Mexico, following a Professorship at the University of California, Berkeley, she became Professor of English at the University of California at Los Angeles.

Her novel *The Woman Who Owned the Shadows* (1983), written from the perspective of a woman recovering from mental collapse, is the first novel by and about a Native American woman. It is constructed from fragments of memory and includes diverse forms such as interior monologues, letters, doctors' notes and divorce papers. She has written books of criticism, including the groundbreaking *The Sacred Hoop: Recovering the Feminine in American Indian Traditions* (1986) in which she expresses the need for Native Americans to recognize 'our amazing ability to endure, recover, restore our ancient values and life ways, and then blossom'. She has also edited critical anthologies, the most notable of which, *Spider Woman's Granddaughters: Traditional Tales and Contemporary Writing by Native American Women* (1990), won the 1990 American Book Award. In 1994 she published an anthology in two volumes called *Voice of the Turtle: A Century of American Indian Fiction* (1994). Although she is prolific as a poet, she is best known for her prose writings. She is sometimes discussed as a lesbian writer and cites GERTRUDE STEIN and AUDRE LORDE amongst her influences.

MAB

Allfrey, Phyllis Shand 1915–86 Journalist, politician and writer, who was born, and lived, in Dominica. She was active in the British Fabian Society, started the Labour Party in Dominica in 1955 and, when she was expelled from that, started the opposition Dominica Freedom Party. Allfrey became the first woman minister in the short-lived West Indian Federation in 1958. She was editor of the daily newspaper, the *Dominica Star*, and published four collections of poetry and a novel. Her short stories and a second novel may yet be published posthumously.

Allfrey's poetry is not widely available but her novel, *The Orchid House*, continues to be read and was recently adapted for television. A member of the tiny white population of Dominica, Allfrey captures the disintegration of the old social order of the plantation system in her novel and points the way to reconstruction via an alliance across racial and social boundaries. The novel argues that the white landowning class

must align themselves politically with the black masses and insists on the collective power of women working together to overthrow the decaying power of the patriarchal COLONIAL order. Writing at a time when West Indian writing was the domain of male, black, writers, Allfrey remains an important, pioneering, literary figure.

DdeCN

Allingham, Margery (Louise) 1904–96 British writer of thrillers and DETECTIVE STORIES, notable for charm as well as for excitement. Like many of her coevals – DOROTHY L. SAYERS, NGAIO MARSH – Allingham was at times a little in love with her hero, Albert Campion, but, far more than Sayers, she allowed him to change and grow as her work proceeded, not least because she needed him to be more complex and damaged. She herself had a conventional education and married young.

Campion appears in the majority of her books, as a comparatively conventional *matinée-idol* sleuth in *The Crime at Black Dudley* (1929) and rather more interestingly in her novels of the late 1930s, such as *Dancers in Mourning* (1937) and *The Fashion in Shrouds* (1938). These last two are interesting not only for their detailed depiction of small closed worlds disrupted by murder, but in their sense of the extent to which the disruption is not merely the sudden violent deaths but the breach of that trust on which daily life in small communities of colleagues is based.

World War II produced a sequence of spy thrillers – *Traitor's Purse* (1942) stands out – which have, at their best, a paranoid quality, a sense of urgency and menace. The latter stage of her career produced fluent but forgettable psychological thrillers in which Campion's urbanity was that of the physician as much as the sleuth. Closely linked to these in theme, yet entirely different in its effect, is *The Tiger in the Smoke* (1952) which bursts the usual format wide open by setting Campion in ineffectual opposition to a charismatic psychopath in a wrecked post-war London of bomb-sites and dark shadows. It is Allingham's most remarkable book and one in which she chooses – as she rarely does – to stretch the limits of her chosen form.

She was at her most assured when being witty; of the more comic Campion books, the best is perhaps the last, *More Work for the Undertaker* (1948), where her usually snobbish portrayal of comic cockneys acquires an elegiac tone. A class she had patronized had surprised her by their courage and sacrifices, and the jokes acquire an edge, not least at her own expense.

RK

Allnutt, Gillian 1949– British poet whose versatile use of rhyme and vowel music is distinctive in her generation of post-feminist poets and poetries. Allnutt was born in London, received a convent and grammar-school education and studied Philosophy and English

at Cambridge. She has taught in further and adult education, and was poetry editor for *City Limits* before moving to County Durham to live and work. During her time in London she lived in squats, short-life and co-op houses, and involved herself actively in the Women's Arts Alliance Poetry Workshop from 1976 to 1980. Her experimental pamphlet, *The rag and bone man's daughter imagines a happy family* (1978), and first major book, *Spitting the Pips Out* (1981), were helped into existence by the support she received from other women writers. Her follow-up work, *Lizzie Siddall: Her Journal (1862)* (1985), is a successful sustained attempt to inhabit the mind of the ironmonger's daughter who eventually married Rossetti.

She co-edited the controversial anthology *The New British Poetry* in 1988. Allnutt had by this time left London for the North-East: 'to a self-imposed exile in which I hoped I might learn to stop leaving'. Her subsequent collections – particularly *Blackthorn* (1994) and *Nantucket and the Angel* (1997) – demonstrate a deepening of spiritual consciousness and lyric authority. Her stance owes much to the thorny grace and example of Anna Akhmatova (whom she acknowledges as her 'adoptive godmother'). Allnutt's boldly poetic syntax, often rooted in past models, is a significant venture in British POSTMODERNISM. DM

A.L.O.E. (A Lady of England) [Charlotte Maria Tucker] 1821–93 This English writer of hymns, poetry and evangelical fiction never married, living in her parents' home until 1869 and with a brother until 1875. She spent the remaining eighteen years of her life as a missionary in India. Only beginning to publish her writings after her father's death in 1851, she nevertheless produced over 140 works. A gifted linguist, she translated some of these titles into Urdu and Punjabi as aids to her mission work.

Some of her books, for example *Battling With the World* (1904), are conventional stories about Christian children combating adversity. Such books are full of improving conversations and biblical quotations. However, the best of her writing is allegorical in nature. One such allegory is *The Crown of Success: or, Four Heads to Furnish* (1862), an often-amusing tale in which four children are each left to furnish a room whilst their mother is out. The rooms in question are, metaphorically, the 'four heads' of the title. EMH

Alther [née Reed], Lisa 1944– American comic novelist from Kingsport, Tennessee, who after going north for college, marriage and work in publishing, wrote a raucous fiction that became a much-loved best-seller. *Kinflicks* (1976), the story of Tennesseean Ginny Babcock's evolution from southern belle to hippy, lesbian separatist and suburban housewife, is a ribald, jaunty satire of the cultural and sexual manners of the

1960s and early 1970s. *Original Sins* (1981) drew on similar material with equal success; with *Other Women* (1984) she continued to show a punchy irreverence and an ability to bring lesbian stories into the mainstream that invite comparison with fellow Southerner RITA MAE BROWN, who has praised her work. Married at 22 to a doctor, she moved to rural Vermont where she raised her daughter and wrote full time, journalism as well as fiction. Her 1990 novel *Bedrock*, set in a Vermont town of fallen industry and backwoods perversion, was described as 'a southerner's version of northern gothic'. *Five Minutes in Heaven* (1995) recounted a displaced Southern woman's emotional and sexual development, and included a passage of 1960s description which showed that hedonistic spirit to be one with which she has an ongoing affinity. SB

Alvarez, Julia 1950– Poet and novelist. Originally from the Dominican Republic, Alvarez escaped with her family to the United States in 1960 when her parents fled the secret police of the Trujillo dictatorship. Her best-known work is *How the Garcia Girls Lost Their Accents* (1991), a collection of linked stories that look at the split lives of the four Garcia sisters as they shuttle back and forth – literally and metaphorically – between the Dominican Republic and the United States. She is also the author of two books of poetry, and two additional works of fiction: *In the Time of the Butterflies* (1995), a historical novel which recounts the 1960 assassination of the Mirabal sisters by the Trujillo dictatorship, and *Yo!* (1997), which continues the story of one of the characters from *How the Garcia Girls Lost Their Accents*. SMSr

Alvi, Moniza 1954– British poet Moniza Alvi was born in Lahore, Pakistan. She was educated at the Universities of York and London, training as a teacher. She became Head of English at Aylwin School in London, and in 1995 married Robert Coe.

Alvi's poetry came to public notice in 1992 when she co-won the Poetry Business prize. *Peacock Luggage*, a pamphlet, was subsequently published by Smith Doorstop of Huddersfield in 1992, and her first two collections, *The Country at My Shoulder* (1993) and *A Bowl of Warm Air* (1996), by Oxford University Press. *The Country at My Shoulder* was well received – it was chosen for special marketing in 1995 under the banner of 'New Generation Poets'. Observers of the new British poetry scene began grouping Alvi with a rising generation of Asian women writers in Britain, including MEERA SYAL and SUJATA BHATT. Her ear for cadence also recalled the 'Persian' lyricism of MIMI KHALVATI. With hindsight, these groupings appear to be socio-critical wish-fulfilment – Alvi is on record as saying 'the poems that do not concern my Asian background are equally important to me . . . I have written about

Pakistan partly because it was, in the first instance, a fantasy.' Indeed, she left Pakistan for England when only a few months old. She writes an economical free verse that has a disarming sense of artlessness, though the apparent 'innocence' of her voice disguises a strong intellectual drive to explore and come to terms with her dual cultural worlds, their languages and pressures.

DM

American In Paris, An (1940) *New Yorker* correspondent GENÈT [JANET FLANNER] was one of the most well-known characters of the Left Bank, and her memoirs and journalism are among the most vivid accounts of early 20th-century European cultural life. Part of this legacy is *An American In Paris* in which Flanner maps the parameters of the social, cultural and political life between the two world wars. Her virtual camera moves in a panoptical manner, recording as well as criticizing the figures and events that marked the interwar period. Portraits of artists and writers like Picasso, Stravinsky, Isadora Duncan and EDITH WHARTON are featured alongside portraits of Elsa Sciaparelli, renowned for the sweaters she designed, and the Papin sisters who, while working as housemaids, brutally murdered their landlady, Mme Lancelin, and her daughter. This spectacular parade offers a taste of the Zeitgeist and culminates in a satirical profile of Hitler's rise to power.

MPE

Ana Historic (1988) Poet DAPHNE MARLATT's first novel shares the concern with the lesbian feminist 'salvaging' of patriarchal language evinced also in her poetry and in the work of some of her Canadian contemporaries, among them NICOLE BROSSARD.

While grieving for her dead mother Ina, the first-person narrator, Annie, is searching for and finding her place in a lineage of women. She re/writes the lives of three women: her mother's story; that of Mrs Richards, who appears in three brief lines in the civic archives of Vancouver; and the script of her own life. The stories of women are found 'in the gap between two stories', in the interruptions and absences, beyond the categorization of fact and fiction. The reclaimed female language does not follow any linear order but consists of 'words that flow out from within' the female body, signifying the interconnectedness of women, across generations, over history, linked by blood and birth – and by desire. Annie's re/search leads her to Zoe, and in their love-making they read each other 'into the page ahead'.

CES

Anderson, Barbara 1926– New Zealand novelist and short-story writer noted for her acute observation and sharp irreverent eye for absurdity. Her background is upper middle-class Anglophile New Zealand: her husband was vice-admiral of the Royal

New Zealand Navy. She began writing when she was 60 and success with a collection of short stories, *I Think We Should Go Into The Jungle* (1989), was followed by five widely acclaimed novels between 1991 and 1996.

Anderson has said that she is fascinated by the *modus vivendi* of marriage and family life, and she probes these institutions with a mixture of sharpness and tenderness that recalls JANE AUSTEN, with perhaps a dash of JOANNA TROLLOPE in her easy familiarity with the pre-occupations of the middle classes. *Girls' High* (1991) portrays the love-lorn staff of a girls' school, while the next novel, *Portrait of the Artist's Wife* (1992), winner of the NZ\$ 20,000 Goodman Fielder Wattie Award, is a breezily humorous and sometimes bleak picture of well-off, white New Zealand. *All The Nice Girls* (1992) is set on a New Zealand naval base in the 1960s and draws partly on the author's own experience as a navy wife.

The plot of *The House Guest* (1995), about an English tutor's investigations into the life of a dead poet (reminiscent of A. S. BYATT's novel *POSESSION*), is a vehicle for the author's sharp wit and eye for the bizarre. In *Proud Garments* (1996) Anderson casts a sardonic eye on marriage and family relationships, sometimes with the sardonic detachment of a Mr Bennet, but also with some admiration for those whose response to the absurdity of life is a stoic determination to make the best of it.

RB

Anderson [née McCubbin], Doris 1921– A journalist, novelist and activist, born in Medicine Hat and raised in Calgary, Alberta. She attended the Calgary Normal School and the University of Alberta, and after two years teaching in country schools moved to Toronto where she worked in advertising and journalism, becoming editor of *Châtelaine* magazine (1957–77). As the daughter of a working mother in the 'dirty thirties', and a working mother to three sons herself, she experienced many of the challenges and problems facing women; she changed *Châtelaine* from a typical 'women's magazine' focused on health, beauty, fashion and cooking into one combining those subjects with serious feminist discussion of birth control, battered babies, divorce laws, equal pay for work of equal value, child care, lesbianism, women's prisons, sexual harassment, and patriarchy in religion, schools and unions. Anderson wrote many influential editorials, one of which was instrumental in pressing the government of Canada to establish the Royal Commission on the Status of Women (1967–70). She was appointed president of the Canadian Advisory Council on the Status of Women (1979–81), a job that came to a precipitous end when she resigned because of a conflict over the inclusion of women and women's issues in the constitutional negotiations in 1982. From 1982–4, she was president of the National Action

Committee on the Status of Women (NAC). Among her many awards, Anderson has been made an Officer of the Order of Canada.

She wrote three novels – *Affairs of State* (1988), *Rough Layout* (1981) and *Two Women* (1979) – which did not achieve great critical acclaim. *The Unfinished Revolution: Status of Women in Twelve Countries* (1991) was based on her travels and interviews. Her autobiography, *Rebel Daughter*, was published in 1996. For Anderson, women are more ‘focused and practical’ than men. Her autobiography ends with this question: ‘Isn’t it time women stopped holding up half the sky and began making at least HALF the decisions right down here on earth?’

GHN

Anderson [née Mason], Ethel 1883–1958 Australian essayist, short-story writer and poet. She was born in Leamington, England, whilst her Australian parents were visiting Britain, and grew up on her grandfather’s property in Picton, New South Wales. Educated initially at home by governesses, she later attended Sydney Church of England Girls’ Grammar School. After marrying an officer in the British Army, she lived in India for a number of years and moved back to Australia when he took up a diplomatic post there in 1926.

She considered herself to be chiefly a poet and, at a time when Australia had ‘not become acceptable to other English-speaking nations’, fused the two cultures to which she belonged ‘to perform for Australia, the service the Nature poets . . . have done for England’. In *Sunday at Yarralumla* (1947) she evokes English Sunday languor and Australian lushness, and in *Squatter’s Luck* (1942, enlarged 1954) she celebrates both the people and the landscape of Australia. However, she is best remembered for her fiction and in particular for her arch but incisive discontinuous narrative, *At Parramatta* (1956). Set in the 1850s it comments on patriarchal power and exposes male foibles by drawing parallels with the seven deadly sins.

JSte

Anderson, Jessica 1916– Born in Queensland and brought up in Brisbane, Australian novelist Anderson has lived for much of her life in Sydney. After many years working in radio, her first novel, *An Ordinary Lunacy*, was published in 1963, followed by *The Last Man’s Head* (1970), a foray into DETECTIVE FICTION. *Tirra Lirra by the River* (1978) was the first of Anderson’s novels to be published in Australia and is also her most famous and critically acclaimed work; it won the Miles Franklin Award and the Australian Natives’ Association Literary Award. *The Impersonators* (1980) also won the Miles Franklin Award and the NSW Premier’s Award. Her more recent novels are *Taking Shelter* (1989) and *One of the Wattle Birds* (1994).

Anderson’s best-known novels – *The Commandant*

(1975), *Tirra Lirra by the River* and *The Impersonators* – have been referred to as novels of expatriation, and all involve journeys between Australia and Europe. In *Tirra Lirra by the River*, in particular, the physical journey to London of the protagonist, Nora Porteous, is a metaphor for her personal and creative development. Anderson’s vivid portrayal of location is most clear in her short-story collection *Stories from the Warm Zone and Sydney Stories* (1987). The first section of the collection, an autobiographical short-story cycle set in Queensland, is her most poignant evocation of her childhood home while the second section of the collection consists of three stories about Sydney – ‘the only place’, Nora says in *Tirra Lirra*, ‘where I ever felt at home’.

SS

Anderson, Margaret (Carolyn) 1886–1973 As editor from 1914 to 1929 of the American avant-garde literary magazine, *The Little Review*, Anderson was one of the ‘movers and shakers’ who opened a window for modern art. Born in Indianapolis, and raised in Columbus, Indiana, Anderson succinctly remarked ‘I liked my home and disliked my family.’ She escaped as soon as she could to Chicago and founded *The Little Review* on a shoestring. She fended off a takeover bid from AMY (LAWRENCE) LOWELL, and sought support from well-heeled society matrons. She was joined by Jane Heap as assistant editor in 1916 (‘You’re the buzz and I’m the sting’, Heap said), and moved the magazine to New York the following year. She published Pound, and through him came to be a vehicle for the writers (Eliot, Lewis, Joyce) he was assembling under the banner of modernism. ‘One can trust M.C.A.’, Pound wrote of Anderson, ‘to die on the bayonets, but not bring up the water and hard tack.’ The moment of bayonets came in 1918 when she began to publish Joyce’s *Ulysses*. Anderson was prosecuted in 1920 and fined \$100 for publishing an obscenity. The *New York Times* did not defend her. The magazine was moved to Paris in 1923, where Anderson became a disciple of the mystic Gurdjieff. She published two volumes of autobiography, *My Thirty Years’ War* (1930) and *The Fiery Fountains* (1953), and edited *The Little Review Anthology* (1953).

EH

Anderson-Dargatz, Gail 1963– Canadian short-story writer and novelist who grew up on a farm in central British Columbia. She worked as a reporter for the local newspaper, then studied Creative Writing at the University of Victoria where she was instructed by the Canadian novelist Jack Hodgins.

The short fiction collected in *The Miss Hereford Stories* (1994) barely hints at the suspense contained in the novel *The Cure for Death by Lightning* (1996), a supernatural story set in central British Columbia in 1941. Its 15-year-old heroine, Beth Weeks, comes of age into a

rural culture contested by two spiritual spheres: the stifling Protestant mores that dominate the local town and the First Nations cosmology evident on the nearby reserve. The native elder and storyteller Bertha Moses provides an empowering model for Beth by lending a decidedly feminist interpretation to the stalking of the community by Coyote, the native trickster figure. Beth's awakening takes place against the backdrop of World War II, making *The Cure for Death by Lightning* a story about women resisting the intertwined patriarchal projects of war and colonization. The narrative is haunted by the spectre of incest, with the father's actions synecdochic for the abuses of patriarchy. Magic realist influences of Hodgins, Isabelle Allende, and especially Laura Esquivel are prominent. The novel has been translated into several languages and has become an international bestseller. Anderson-Dargatz's next novel, *A Recipe for Bees* (1998), tells of a day in the life of its aged protagonist, Augusta, who lives with her husband Karl in an apartment on Vancouver Island. Augusta makes sense of their long marriage by narratively revisiting its 1940s beginning on an isolated sheep ranch in the interior of British Columbia, her need for companionship beyond the marriage, her affair with another man in the nearby town, and the ensuing decades during which she and Karl raised the daughter fathered by the lover. In the 1960s Augusta had come to terms with herself, her husband and her difficult daughter by taking up bee-keeping, just as her mother had done a generation earlier. By the end of the current recounting of her life's story Augusta is able to forgive Karl 'his inadequacies, just as he had forgiven hers so many times in the past'. While there is no suggestion that Augusta's death is imminent, by telling the story she has put her affairs in order.

After several years dairy farming near Parksville on Vancouver Island, in 1997 Anderson-Dargatz and husband Floyd bought a 160-acre farm near Millet, Alberta, with the proceeds from *The Cure for Death by Lightning*. JBM

Angelou, Maya [Marguerite Annie Johnson] 1928– African-American autobiographer and poet whose work gives testimony to the power of African-Americans to endure, and whose life gives testimony to the expression of immense and varied talent. Her best-known works are the five volumes of her autobiography which describes a life notable for its many traumas. The first and most famous volume, *I KNOW WHY THE CAGED BIRD SINGS* (1970), describes her experiences as a victim of child rape and the murder of the rapist by her uncles, which turned her mute for five years. The later volumes of her autobiography record her struggle to overcome involvement in violence, drugs and prostitution to become a mother, poet, civil

rights activist, dancer, actor, singer, producer, composer and journalist.

Angelou left Arkansas for San Francisco during adolescence and then moved to Brooklyn where she met PAULE MARSHALL and James Baldwin. In the 1960s she went to Africa and lived in Ghana and Egypt where she was the editor of the *Arab Observer*. She is historically notable as in 1993 she became the first woman and the first African-American to read her poetry, at the request of President Clinton, at a Presidential Inauguration. She has been nominated for the Pulitzer Prize for Poetry, but despite the critical praise for *Just Give Me a Cool Drink of Water 'for I Die* (1971) and *And Still I Rise* (1978), has never won it. The title poem of *And Still I Rise* encompasses Angelou's commitment to life and the resistance of oppression:

Bringing the gifts that my ancestors gave,
I am the dream and the hope of the slave.
I rise.

Her acting and stage career includes being a dancer in the 1950s European tour of *Porgy and Bess* and a role in the television series *Roots*. She has written a television series called *Black, Blues, Black* (1968) and film scripts: *Georgia Georgia* (1971) and *Sister Sister* (1979). She has also written a stage play *Moon on a Rainbow Shawl* (1988). Her seventieth birthday was marked by the publication of her collected poems, *Even the Stars Look Lonesome* (1998). MAB

Anger, Jane fl.1589 Proto-feminist polemical writer. While her name need not be pseudonymous, it conventionally denotes her stance and tone. Her pamphlet, *Jane Anger her Protection for Women* (1589), was probably written in response to the misogynist *Book: his Surfeit in Love* (c.1588), and thus participates in a small-scale 'woman controversy', using her 'anger' as a literary motif. Anger argues that the bad women of history are counterbalanced by bad men, and blames men for women's wilfulness. She is scathing on the subject of male infidelity, and condemns men as seducers who 'rob women of their honour undeservedly': 'ravenous hawks . . . who devour us'. She notes that English law allots 'terrible laws' to punish sexual offenders, but that these 'will not serve to restrain men'. Anger defends women's speech, and argues that written as well as spoken male language poses a threat to women, as men make 'their pens the executioners of their barbarous manners'. JC

Anne of Green Gables (1908) L.M. MONTGOMERY'S first and strongest novel describes a Prince Edward Island orphan adopted by Matthew and Marilla Cuthbert, an ageing brother and sister seeking a boy to help with their chores. They are mistakenly given a girl whose vivid imagination enriches their lives and

proves more valuable than practical help. There is a cost, however, for Matthew's death is caused partly by overwork. Once again, Anne's sterling qualities provide compensation and she abandons her career plans in order to stay home with Marilla. The appeal of Montgomery's freckled, red-haired character has never diminished. She has been the subject of numerous films, plays and musicals. The house described in the novel has become a literary shrine drawing tourists from all over the world. Although the book would normally fall into the young adult category, its appeal includes all ages and levels of sophistication. Literary critics treat it seriously as a *Künstlerroman*. Anne's relationship with her kindred spirit, Diane Barry, is often invoked in books dealing with female friendship, notably in MARGARET ATWOOD's *Cat's Eye*. JG

Annie John (1983) JAMAICA KINCAID's short novel (recounted in the first person but not explicitly autobiographical) deals with an imaginative young girl growing up in Antigua. Annie John's intellectual gifts and her obsession with death set her apart from her social surroundings, and when her passionate, richly sensuous relationships with her mother and her schoolfriends gradually wear off she is left feeling isolated and disillusioned. Despite her youth, she is a diligent observer of the people she is close to and a shrewd judge of their motives, yet her compassion for them (especially for her father and for her less gifted peers) usually outweighs her scorn for their limitations. The exception to this rule is her mother, whose dazzling beauty and apparent hypocrisy she finds difficult to overlook or forgive (though Kincaid drops hints that forgiveness will come with emotional and physical maturity). When Annie John leaves Antigua for England at the end of the book, the reader registers both her satisfaction at having outgrown her place of origin and her wariness of the 'emptying out' that this displacement may produce. BWB

Anthony, Susan Brownell 1820–1906 American reformer, editor. Raised in a Quaker household committed to the ideas of equality and service, Susan was educated in her father's mill school and began teaching in 1839. Moving to her family home in Rochester, New York, in 1849, she devoted herself to social work and reform. Her first cause, temperance, led her directly to women's rights when she was denied permission, on the basis of her gender, to speak at a temperance society meeting. In 1851, she met ELIZABETH CADY STANTON, and they formed a working friendship that would be the driving force behind the feminist anti-slavery movement and the campaign for women's right to vote. They fought fiercely for passage of the Thirteenth Amendment (1865), and thereafter turned their energies toward

women's suffrage. From 1868 to 1870, they published the *Revolution*, a journal focusing on women's rights, improved working conditions and equal marriage laws, and whose motto was 'Men, their rights, and nothing more; women, their rights, and nothing less'. In 1869, she and Stanton founded the National Woman Suffrage Association. In 1872, Anthony was arrested for trying to vote. While awaiting her trial, she toured central New York arguing that the Fifteenth Amendment granted women the right to vote because it guaranteed the rights of 'citizens'. 'We appeal to women everywhere', she said, 'to exercise their too long neglected "citizen's right to vote"'. From 1881 to 1886, she and Stanton, together with Matilda Joselyn Cage, wrote the first three volumes of *History of Woman Suffrage*. She was president of the National American Woman Suffrage Association from 1892 until 1900, but did not live to see women granted the vote. SP

Antin, Mary (Grabau) 1881–1949 Antin's *The Promised Land* (1912) is the most widely read account by a woman of the American immigrant experience. Born in the *shtetl* of Plotzk in Russian Poland, Antin accompanied her parents when they emigrated to Boston in 1884. She attended Girls' Latin School, and Columbia University, marrying a professor there. Her first book, *From Plotzk to Boston* (1899), a description of family life in the Jewish Pale and of immigration, was written in Yiddish when Antin was 11. She was welcomed in Brahmin Boston as a child prodigy, 'a queer, thin little thing, . . . overdressed for the occasion and with dreadfully frizzed hair'. Antin's is one of the very few accounts of immigration actually written by a child. Her principal work, *The Promised Land*, first serialized in the *Atlantic Monthly*, retold her family's story, in greater detail, and celebrated America as offering salvation to her people. It was followed in 1914 by *They Who Knock at Our Gates: A Complete Gospel of Immigration*. After several years as a popular lecturer and advocate of patriotism and assimilation during World War I, she suffered a nervous breakdown, withdrew from the lecture circuit, and did not write again. EH

Anzaldúa, Gloria 1942– Self-styled 'Latina-Chicana dyke feminist writer', Anzaldúa is an important feminist theorist of the late 20th century. *This Bridge Called My Back: Radical Writings by Women of Color* (1981), co-edited with CHERRIE MORAGA, received the Before Columbus Foundation's American Book Award and consolidated the importance of women of colour in the feminist movement. The anthology was followed by *BORDERLANDS/LA FRONTERA* (1987), an equally influential text that blends history and folklore, personal reflection and essay, prose and poetry, and several different languages and dialects in an effort to negotiate the 'borderlands' that define, trouble, and finally empower identity. In 1990, Anzaldúa

edited *Making Face, Making Soul / Haciendo Caras: Creative and Critical Perspectives by Women of Color*. In the tradition of *This Bridge Called My Back*, this second anthology brings together women from a wide variety of backgrounds in the common project of rejecting culturally prescribed masks and establishing new voices. More recently, Anzaldúa has come to focus more specifically on issues of sexuality, receiving the Sappho Award of Distinction in 1992 and editing an issue of *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* entitled 'Theorizing Lesbian Experience' in 1993. She is also the author of two bilingual CHILDREN'S BOOKS: *Friends from the Other Side/Amigos Del Otro Lado* (1993), which tells the story of a friendship between a Mexican-American girl and a Mexican boy, and *Prietita and the Ghost Woman / Prietita y La Llorona* (1996), which rewrites the story of La Llorona. SMSt

Appachana, Anjana 1958– Indian short-story writer and novelist whose first volume of short fiction, *Incantations and Other Stories* (1991), marked her out as a distinctly new voice among Indian fiction writers in English. She received her schooling in Gwalior, and graduated in English from Lady Shri Ram College, New Delhi. After an MA in Sociology from Jawaharlal Nehru University she worked in Delhi for five years before going to Pennsylvania State University to do an MFA. She describes herself as 'belonging to India but (now) living in Tempe, Arizona' with her husband and daughter, Malavika.

Sympathy and satire co-exist in her writing, a matter-of-fact tone concealing the seething intensity. Stories from her first volume have been anthologized many times, the latest inclusion being in *The Vintage Book of Indian Writing* (1997), edited by Salman Rushdie and Elizabeth West. Her second and major work is a 516 page novel, *Listening Now* (1998), in which seven overlapping narratives of seemingly ordinary women in Delhi and Bangalore trace an intricate design, dark and smouldering with untold secrets and submerged guilt. She writes in a ruthlessly REALISTIC mode woven with strands of irony and humour. MMu

Archer, Robyn 1948– Australian Robyn Archer, born in Adelaide, has distinguished herself as a stage performer as well as a writer, in a varied career. Most of what she has written she has also performed, with a consistent emphasis on sexual politics. In common with many other Australian feminists, Robyn Archer is associated with left-wing politics and sympathy for the working class. Her satirical examinations of patriarchy's treatment of women and her sympathetic portrayals of female heroism and victimhood have been conveyed in shows such as the 1979 *A Star is Torn*, where her powerful and adaptable singing voice enabled her to interpret and celebrate earlier female singers such as Bessie Smith, Judy Holliday and Janis Joplin. As a

singer she has specialized in the work of Kurt Weill and Bertholt Brecht. She has repeatedly exploited cabaret as a political tool: her 1990 *Cafe Fledermaus* was one example, as was her earlier *The Pack of Women* (1981). Archer continues to write and perform, but has also developed a career as an arts administrator. She was director of the National Festival of Australian Theatre (Canberra) from 1993 to 1996, and 1988–2000 director of the prestigious Adelaide Festival. She has written two plays: *Il Magnifico*, about Lorenzo de Medici, and *The Conquest of Carmen Miranda*; a CHILDREN'S BOOK, *Mrs Bottle Burps* (1983); and three books based on her most popular cabaret shows. Robyn Archer has a broad range of talents and has been as successful as a theatre director, singer, actor and arts administrator as she has as a writer for the theatre. HTh

Archibald, Edith Jessie 1854–1936 Canadian feminist, biographer and novelist. She was born in St John's, Newfoundland, attended private schools in London and New York City, and married a distant cousin who owned a mine and became president of the Bank of Nova Scotia in Halifax. During the 1890s she was active in the non-confrontational suffrage movement and served as president of the Women's Christian Temperance Union (1892–6) and the Halifax Local Council of Women (1896–1906). During World War I, she worked with the Red Cross. In 1917 she led a suffrage delegation to the legislature. She wrote fiction for periodicals and published a life of her father, Sir Edward Mortimer Archibald, a diplomat (1924). Her play *The Token*, staged in Halifax in 1927 and later rewritten as a novel (1930), follows several romantic couples through contrasting settings – a Cape Breton mining community, French smugglers' islands, St John's and Boston. JSG

Arendt, Hannah 1906–75 German-Jewish philosopher and political scientist. Arendt went to Marburg to study philosophy and at the age of 18 became the lover of her teacher, Martin Heidegger (then 35, already married and writing his master work, *Being and Time*), whom she was later to refer to as 'the secret king of (modern) thought'. Later she left for Heidelberg to study with Karl Jaspers, under whose supervision she wrote her doctoral dissertation on Saint Augustine's concept of love. It reveals her other great influence: Rahel Varnhagen, a German-Jewish BLUESTOCKING who maintained a celebrated salon in Berlin at a time (1790–1806) when intellectual Jews mixed with non-Jewish writers and intellectuals. Arendt, like Varnhagen, was obsessed with modern Jews' 'worldlessness' due to their self-exile from the gilded ghetto of the Jewish middle class and the uncertainty of their place in Gentile society.

With Hitler's rise to power, Arendt emigrated to

Paris, in 1933, and was immersed in Jewish relief activities until 1941, when she fled to America, where she lived (in New York) for the rest of her life. *The Origins of Totalitarianism* (1951) made her famous, and controversial, because she argued that Stalinist Russia and Nazi Germany were functionally the same. She was resented by the left for the ease with which her arguments were co-opted to bolster the Western position in the Cold War. In her most important completed theoretical work, *The Human Condition* (1958), she adapted some of Heidegger's key ideas. She sought consistently to dignify the idea of political life as against the contempt for the worldly world of most philosophers, Heidegger included.

Eichmann in Jerusalem: A Report on the Banality of Evil (1963) is her best-known book. It began as a series of *New Yorker* articles on the trial of Adolph Eichmann, the Nazi bureaucrat in charge of the deportation of Jews to the concentration camps. She brought down on herself the rage of old friends and of the organized Jewish community in America. She argued that, far from being monstrous according to our conventional romantic and religious ideas of evil, Eichmann represented a new kind of monstrosity: normal, ordinary, at worst ludicrous and incapable of thought. She said that many fewer Jews would have gone to their deaths had the Jewish community's leaders not provided the enemy with so much information and aid. During her last decade she surprised those who had thought of her as basically conservative by her sympathetic essays on the student movement against the war in Vietnam. She wrote at length about the crisis of authority, in this respect as in others deeply influencing the left-wing German social philosopher Jurgen Habermas.

Although she came late to the English language, she proved to be a gifted writer in the tradition of Jewish ironists like Heinrich Heine. She had many literary friends, including MARY MCCARTHY, W.H. Auden, and Robert Lowell.

MLK

'Ariadne' fl.1696 Playwright about whom nothing is known, except that she wrote the comedy, *She Ventures and He Wins*. Staged at Lincoln's Inn Fields in September 1695, it was published a year later as the work of 'a Young Lady'. The play employs a number of contemporary themes and motifs, including a heroine disguised in boy's clothes, the testing of her husband-to-be, and, in the sub-plot, a bed-trick and the gulling of a country booby. There are several similarities with APHRA BEHN's plays, including *THE LUCKY CHANCE* (1686), and 'Ariadne' claims in her Prologue to have been inspired by both Behn and KATHERINE PHILIPS. Although the anonymous writer suggests that a favourable reception for her first play may make her 'ambitious enough to be known', no other play has been attributed to her, although it is possible that she

wrote the uncredited *The Unnatural Mother*, which appeared in 1697.

RDM

Ariel (1965) SYLVIA PLATH's second (and posthumous) volume of poetry. Edited and rearranged by Ted Hughes, and containing the poems Plath wrote in the period leading up to her suicide in 1963, *Ariel* caused a literary sensation. It includes her most notorious works, such as 'Daddy', 'Lady Lazarus', the Bee Sequence and 'Edge'. The most reductive and vulturous readings treat it as little more than an exceptionally eloquent suicide note. However, closer attention discovers that it is witty as well as grim, invigorating as well as chilling, and stylish as well as violent.

Its range is panoramic. It is concerned with the nature of power at work in history and in language – and the ways in which it both shapes and jeopardizes our personal identities and relationships. Particularly interesting to feminists is the way in which the domestic realm – sanctified in the fifties as the place where women could find their ultimate fulfilment – is represented as a kind of GOTHIC nightmare. The speaker of 'Stings' protests:

I am no drudge
Though for years I have eaten dust
And dried plates with my dense hair.
And seen my strangeness evaporate,
Blue dew from dangerous skin

These are challenging poems, semantically, emotionally and politically. The language is active and aggressive, dense and intense, dirty and difficult. As Plath herself wrote, 'I really don't think poems should be all that chaste'.

AFT

Armour, Rebecca Agatha (Thompson) 1845–91 Canadian novelist, educator and historian. She was born in Fredericton, New Brunswick, the oldest of four daughters of Irish immigrants. Her father was a grocer. Educated at teachers' college, she taught locally from 1864 to 1873, then in southern New Brunswick, where she was honoured as one of the best female teachers. She married John G. Thompson, a carriage maker, in 1885. In 1880 she published a series of sketches, 'Landmarks of Old Fredericton,' in the Fredericton *Capital*. The St John *Telegraph* serialized her HISTORICAL NOVELS (e.g. *Lady Rosamond's Secret*, 1878; *Sylvia Leigh*, 1880; and *Marguerite Verne: or, Scenes from Canadian Life*, 1886), in which SENSATIONAL plots unfold against a backdrop of local colour and regional pride. Her fiction remains of interest for its rich depiction of New Brunswick social life during the 19th century. JSG

Armstrong, Jeannette 1948– Okanagan Native Canadian poet, novelist and educationalist, concerned with the contemporary revision and restoration of